DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 102 VT 009 824

AUTHOR	Mangum, Garth L.; Glenn, Lowell M.
TITLE	Employing the Disadvantaged in the Federal Civil Service. Policy Papers in Human Resources and Industrial Relations No. 13.
INSTITUTION	Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. Inst. of Labor and Industrial Relations.; National Manpower Policy Task Force, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Feb 69
NOTE	48p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan-Wayne State University, P.O. Box 1567, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 ($1.50)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Culturally Disadvantaged, *Employment Opportunities, *Federal Government, *Government Employees, Manpower Utilization, Negro Employment, *On the Job Training
IDENTIFIERS	Civil Service Commission

ABSTRACT

Government appeals for private employers to hire the hardcore unemployed are logically answered by the query: "Does the Federal Government, the Nation's largest employer, have its own house in order?" This paper explores the extent to which permanent civil service jobs have been opened to the disadvantaged. Problems discovered are similar to those faced in the private sector--employing the disadvantaged conflicts with the desire to hire the best personnel, and it challenges the merit system. An understanding of the philosophy and procedures of the civil service and the constraints they impose on efforts to hire the disadvantaged is necessary to evaluate the attempts being made to resolve the inherent conflict. Washington, D.C. and San Francisco provide contrasting studies of the efforts and the constraints within the service. The paper concludes with proposals for widening access to federal employment for the disadvantaged without abandoning the essential objectives merit employment was designed to accomplish. (Author/BH)

Employing the Disadvantaged in the Federal Civil Service

ED041102

POLICY PAPERS IN
HUMAN RESOURCES AND
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
No. 13

Garth L. Mangum
Lowell M. Glenn

THE INSTITUTE OF LABOR AND
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
The University of Michigan
Wayne State University

VT009824

a joint publication with the
National Manpower Policy Task Force

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EMPLOYING THE DISADVANTAGED IN THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE

by

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Washington, D. C.
February 1969

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PREFACE

This monograph emerged from a Ford Foundation financed project at the Center for Manpower Policy Studies at George Washington University to evaluate federal manpower policies and programs. As pressure increased on the private sector to employ the disadvantaged, it seemed reasonable to assess the contributions of the federal government as the nation's largest employer. For help in this assessment and critical comments on various drafts, we are indebted to personnel of the Civil Service Commission and a number of federal and District of Columbia agencies as well as to our colleagues Sar A. Levitan and Arnold L. Nemore. A special debt of gratitude is owed to Donald C. Bullock for his forthright description of the San Francisco experience.

The Authors

Washington, D.C.
September 16, 1968

INTRODUCTION

Government appeals for private employers to hire the hard-core unemployed are logically answered by the query: "Does the federal government, the nation's largest employer, have its own house in order?"

This paper explores the extent to which permanent civil service jobs have been opened to those having difficulty in competing for available jobs, private or public. The exploration begins with a look at a conflict not unlike that faced by private employers. Employing the disadvantaged not only conflicts with the desire of public employers to recruit the best available personnel; it also challenges the hard-won principle of merit employment—competitive selection based solely on merit. An understanding of the philosophy and procedures of the civil service and the constraints they impose on efforts to hire the disadvantaged is necessary to evaluate the attempts being made to resolve the inherent conflict. Washington, D.C. and San Francisco provide contrasting studies of the efforts and the constraints within the service.

We conclude with some modest proposals for widening access to federal employment for the disadvantaged without abandoning the essential objectives merit employment was designed to accomplish.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MERIT EMPLOYMENT

Merit employment emerged eighty-five years ago as a reaction to the "spoils" system. Jobs in the federal Civil Service, rather than being dispensed as political patronage, were to be equally available to all and dispensed according to individual competence. The competitive examination became the vehicle through which applicants qualify for the available positions which are generally awarded to those who obtain the highest scores. The Pendleton Act of 1883 provided for a three member bi-partisan Civil Service Commission to assure compliance with the Act's provisions. Only ten percent of federal workers were originally covered by the Act but today nine out of ten federal employees are under the merit system.[1]

The position of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) reflects the ambivalence permeating the entire system of public employment. In frequent conflict are demands for efficient provision of service and the need to be responsive to organized pressure groups, including employees who are also voters. The Civil Service Commission has always been torn between its responsibility to build a competent corps of civil servants and its commitment (implicit in the abolition of the spoils system) to protect federal employees from political pressures. Does the Commission represent the employee or the employer? Even if the latter, should the Commission act as the personnel management arm of government or as the protector of the merit system? The two functions are not necessarily the same.

Historically, the Commission has been torn by attempts to fill each role simultaneously. The advent of collective bargaining in the federal Civil Service indicates recognition of the conflicting interests of employers and employees. Civil Service Commission officials claim significant contributions to effective personnel management. However, many agency personnel officers complain that CSC activities consist of directives and requests for compliance reports rather than meaningful technical assistance. They view the regulations giving priority to defense of the merit system as obstacles to innovative personnel

[1]Charles Cook, *Biography of an Ideal: The Diamond Anniversary History of the Federal Civil Service,* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 57.

management. Getting the best individual for each job involves no interference, but assuring equal competitive access to jobs and protection of the employed against inequity often does.

The conflict between defending the merit system and acting as the personnel arm of the federal government became painfully apparent as it became increasingly necessary to attract skilled, technical, managerial, and professional talent into the Civil Service. Departures from tradition were made against considerable opposition in order to recruit specialized personnel. Special treatment for the disadvantaged is an even more radical concept, and the changes in policies and practices it necessitates are just beginning to receive attention.

The obstacles posed by the recruitment, examination, and certification parameters of the Civil Service hiring process provide illustrations. By and large, the Civil Service Commission only sets the rules which govern the federal hiring process, leaving actual personnel administration to individual agencies. The number of separate announcements and examinations has been bewildering. However, these have recently been consolidated somewhat by the establishment of 65 Interagency Boards (IAB) in various localities, replacing the 650 separate examining boards in existence until 1966. The IAB are responsible for examining and certifying all applicants eligible for federal employment. They will also provide one-stop federal job information centers to review the background, training, and experience of individuals and to outline possible job opportunities for them.

The practice of relying on passive announcement of examinations, rather than aggressively recruiting personnel, has its roots in a democratic theory of public administration which seeks to make it possible for any qualified individual to present himself in competition and be objectively measured on his capabilities. Even the present, more aggressive, stance in recruiting for shortage occupations consists largely of recruiting people to take the examination, not the job.

Federal Civil Service employment is divided generally into two classification systems, the general schedule (GS) for white-collar employees and the wage board classification for blue-collar workers. The attraction and selection of personnel has been eased by telescoping a bewildering number of specific occupational examinations into a series of broad, entry-level exams directed to varied groups of prospective applicants. Such exams as the Office Assistant Examination and the Junior Federal Assistant Examination for high school and junior college graduates and the Federal Service Entrance Examination for college graduates are irrelevant to the needs of the disadvantaged. It is primarily access to secretarial and clerical jobs (GS-1 through 3) and wage board (WB) jobs which are at issue.

Appointments in the GS and skilled WB ranks are ordinarily based on performance in a formal competitive examination given identically to all applicants. The non-skilled wage board applicant, like the highly-skilled specialist,

is judged instead on experience and general background in an "unassembled" examination.

Although blue-collar hiring at the journeyman and junior levels requires experience as well as a written test, there are no experience requirements for blue-collar helpers. Instead, the applicant must pass a written test evaluating general, verbal, and mathematical ability and demonstrate his ability to follow verbal directions. CSC has designed an unassembled examination for "Jobs at the Lowest Levels" designed to measure basic attitudes toward work. No written test is required. Applicants are generally entering the work force for the first time or have restricted ability due to mental or socio-economic handicaps.

Certification and final agency placement complete the hiring process. For each of the general or specific competitive exams, the CSC will establish a local register with all eligibles ranked according to their test score (adjusted by additions for veterans or other special preference). Agencies desiring to fill specific positions select one of the three names sent to them by CSC from among those qualified. If an agency has recruited an applicant, it must wait until he surfaces among the top three of the eligibles on the list.

Competitive examinations can be bypassed for three categories of "excepted positions": Schedule C, confidential and policy-determining positions; Schedule B, positions for which competitive examinations are impractical for a variety of reasons; and Schedule A, which covers positions of neither a confidential nor policy-determining character, requiring no examination, competitive or non-competitive. Many of the latter positions are temporary, designed for such special activities as youth hiring programs, prison inmates on work release, or individuals with physical and mental handicaps.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED

There are no adequate data to assess the extent to which federal agencies have hired the disadvantaged. The issue is qualitative: 15 percent of all federal employees were reported to be Negroes as of November 1967, compared to 11 percent in the labor force as a whole; however, they make up only 1.8 percent of Grades 12-18 and 4 percent of the top wage board occupations. Considering that 1962 showed less than 1 percent in either category, this represents great progress, but it is still a far from sanguine picture.[1]

Pressed by current interest, Commission spokesmen have attempted to estimate the number of disadvantaged persons given jobs. A quarter of a million new employees were hired at the GS-2 (PFS-3 and equivalent wage board) level or below during calendar 1966. Noting that a heavy concentration of these positions were in metropolitan areas and alleging that "civil service exams for low-level jobs typically attract very large numbers of competitors from among the disadvantaged,"[2] the spokesmen simply assumed 50 percent of the new employees, or 125,000, were disadvantaged persons. In addition, the CSC claimed placement of 37,000 disadvantaged youths in special summer programs and 21,000 youths in part-time jobs under the President's Stay-in-School campaign for the same year. Thus, without definition, measurement, or explanation of how so many came to apply for and pass competitive examinations, the federal government reported hiring 183,000 disadvantaged persons in calendar 1966. How many would fit Labor Department criteria of disadvantage—those who are poor and without satisfactory employment and, in addition, are either: (1) school dropouts, (2) minority group members, (3) under 22, (4) over 45, or (5) handicapped—is unknown.[3]

[1]U.S. Civil Service Commission, *Study of Minority Group Employment in the Federal Government, 1967,* (Washington: The Commission, 1968).

[2]Memorandum from the U.S. Civil Service Commission to all Regional Directors, "The Employment and Training of Federal Employees at the Lower Grades," November 2, 1967, (mimeographed).

[3]U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration. Manpower Administration Order No. 2-68, February 8, 1968, (mimeographed).

In June 1968 CSC began collecting data from federal agencies on the number of disadvantaged persons hired using the Labor Department criteria.[1] At the same time, the Commission will request data on both the number who have participated in federal manpower programs during the last two years and those who come from poor families but do not otherwise meet the official criteria of disadvantage. Until such information is available, the extent to which disadvantaged people are actually hired will remain unknown.

[1]U.S. Civil Service Commission, Bulletin No. 291-59, "Instructions for Reporting Appointees Who Are Disadvantaged," May 1968.

OBSTACLES TO HIRING THE DISADVANTAGED

The disadvantaged worker is no more attractive to federal agencies than to private institutions, and government administrators are no less subject to bias than their private counterparts. The problem is compounded by the relatively high proportion of skilled white-collar workers required in federal activities as well as the greater rigidities built into the federal merit system.

Obstacles Inherent in the Disadvantaged

The limited ability of many disadvantaged workers is an obstacle to their employment but not a prohibition. Though the proportion of highly skilled employees in government service is greater than most other industries, there are still many attractive white-collar positions for which disadvantaged workers could be trained, including those of typists, file clerks, messengers, mail clerks, nursing assistants, and technician assistants. The postal service also provides a variety of job opportunities, as do such blue-collar occupations as food service attendants, trade helpers, laundry workers, custodians, and maintenance men.

Lack of education is the most serious handicap facing the disadvantaged in competing for jobs in the federal Civil Service. In addition to low educational attainment in terms of grades completed, studies of ghetto high schools indicate that actual achievement levels of graduates are likely to be comparable to those of seventh or eighth grade students in suburban schools. One study showed that half of the graduates of a Watts (Los Angeles) high school could not read or write well enough to pass basic Civil Service tests. In one case, despite special efforts of recruiters, only one of 51 graduates of a Negro college was able to pass the Federal Service Entrance Examination. At a university without any special program, a recruiter reported all 108 candidates failed the FSEE.

Inadequate diet and health care, compounded by deficient housing conditions, make it difficult to function steadily and effectively in a work environment. For households headed by women, needed child-care facilities are rarely

available. Police records, histories of bad debts, inadequate transportation, and the fear of losing welfare eligibility to take unsteady employment: all hinder the disadvantaged. Finally, the whole problem of locating a job presents formidable obstacles. Recruitment in the ghettos is limited, and slum residents are cut off from both formal and informal sources of job information.

Recruiting the Disadvantaged

Like most employers, the federal Civil Service has historically made little effort to recruit the disadvantaged. Public information and recruitment efforts were largely in middle-class terms, limiting their ability to reach disadvantaged applicants. The recruitment philosophy was one of "here we are—come to us" rather than one of active search for potential talent. Although a shift to active recruiting of skilled candidates occurred some time ago, this approach has yet to be effectively extended to the disadvantaged.

CSC has sought to make agencies more aware of their responsibilities to the disadvantaged. They have channeled considerable information on the government's commitments through Federal Executive Boards, which are personnel advisory groups made up of management representatives from agencies in varied locations throughout the country. An Interagency Board (IAB) representative has been assigned to assist in coordinating federal agency and poverty agency activities in those cities where Concentrated Employment Programs (CEP's) are operating. However, federal personnel people have shown little inclination to involve themselves in outreach activities. They argue that such special consideration is antithetical to the merit system philosophy.

Many critics of the merit system have alleged that unreasonable requirements effectively eliminate disadvantaged applicants. A local poverty agency official in 1967 criticized the strict requirement of listing all criminal or arrest records and the inability of anyone under 18 to obtain federal employment, even if no longer in school.[1] CSC regulations were subsequently changed to require only listing of convictions. In addition, 16 and 17 year olds who had completed high school or training courses such as MDTA or Job Corps were made eligible for employment.

The Examination Obstacle

The current emphasis in rehabilitation of the disadvantaged is on providing employment first, then following up with remedial education and training. This approach, it is hoped, will better motivate the individual to improve his

[1]U.S. Congress, *Examination of the War on Poverty,* Hearings before Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 90th Cong., 1st Sess., 1967, Pt. 4, pp. 1431-4.

various deficiencies. In contrast, the merit system and the use of competitive examinations demands preparation first.

Critics have argued that job performance for many positions is not adequately measured by written tests and that, in fact, the merit system is not truly served because qualified candidates are often excluded. An awareness of these difficulties is evident in the efforts of the CSC to modify those parts of the examining process that have worked against placing the disadvantaged. The bewildering number of exam announcements for individual positions is being replaced by broad spectrum exams. Too extensive reliance on this procedure, however, could eliminate disadvantaged individuals who would be outmatched in competition with candidates with better qualifications.

The content and administration of examinations frequently preclude success by the disadvantaged. Even when educational qualifications have been met, inherent cultural biases often confuse those taking the examinations. Because of the non-standard English used by many minority group candidates, these tests often do not accurately measure the true extent of an individual's verbal achievement.

Examinations which require completion within specified time periods and strict adherence to 'standard operating procedures' often frustrate disadvantaged test-takers. In studies where disadvantaged individuals were allowed to ask questions as they arose (rather than only before the exam began) and to work at their own rate (rather than being required to work on a specific section for a specified time), applicants showed marked improvement in individual scores.

In some instances, written tests have also been replaced by job element, aptitude, and attitudinal criteria. However, the scaling down of examination requirements is only a partial answer.

One obstacle is inadequate work histories which often preclude workers from surfacing through the register and gaining employment. Another is the relative desirability of government employment at the entry levels. One possibly extreme example involved two seamstresses of comparable ability who went through the same training course and subsequently found employment, the first in a private commercial establishment at $50 per week, the second in government employment at over $100 per week with substantially better fringe benefits. Those already employed make considerable effort to get on an appropriate federal register, even for these lower skill jobs. Thus, the accessibility of jobs to the disadvantaged is further restricted, even if all the biases of the written tests and other related strictures are removed.

Proposals have been made both within and to the CSC for hiring disadvantaged applicants outside the examination and certification system. Thus, for example,GS-1 and WB-1 registers under the jurisdiction of a local IAB might be abolished, and agencies authorized to hire directly under trial appointments. Candidates could be screened by a variety of methods including certification by local community agencies or, in the case of a need for general literacy, by a simple pass-fail examination. After an initial trial period, the

individual's job performance would be evaluated and if satisfactory, he would become eligible for an indefinite appointment. Conversion to an indefinite appointment would include an agency commitment to provide training and further evaluation for a specified period. Then the employee would be examined in an appropriate manner and converted to a career-conditional appointment as a GS-2. Only after the individual had achieved career conditional status would he be eligible for tenure and its associated merit service appeal rights.

Such a procedure for channeling the disadvantaged into federal service offers the opportunity to assess the potential rather than prior achievement. Though difficult to implement, this seems a reasonable alternative but it has not met with CSC approval.

The Appointment Process

A frequent problem associated with getting the disadvantaged on the payroll is the lengthy time period required to process applicants through regular clearing procedures. A case in point occurred in Washington, D.C. A newspaper article noted the inability of some graduating MDTA-trained computer technicians to gain employment in federal agencies because, though there was a need for such personnel, there was not an appropriate examining vehicle. When, following the publicity, CSC made special arrangements to bring agency personnel representatives and the graduates together, half of the graduating class was hired on a provisional basis. However, it was more than a month before any of the candidates were actually on the job. For the disadvantaged person, in his often precarious economic situation, the delay may be untenable.

In specified, critically short skills, agencies do have authority to circumvent the lengthy examination-certification process, either completely by direct hire or through accelerated 48-hour CSC approval. Agencies that are willing to use their direct hiring authority are able to eliminate most of the difficulties associated with excessive delay between job offer and reporting. However, these techniques are primarily designed to enable agencies to compete with private industry for high talent manpower.

Similar authority has been used to a limited extent to hire disadvantaged individuals referred from Job Fairs conducted by antipoverty agencies. Most of these hires were temporary ones, usually 700-hour appointments. Under this authority, persons must meet the standards of the position to be filled. However, the employing agency is authorized to determine whether an applicant meets these qualifications and to administer the designated written test when one is required. These appointments can be extended beyond 700 hours only with authorization from the CSC. Such authorization generally comes, if it comes at all, in one of two forms. When the individual involved

has qualified on the appropriate competitive examination and has come within reach on the register, his name is referred to the agency and he can be given a career-conditional appointment. If no appropriate register exists, or if the register is inadequate, a TAPER (Temporary Authority Pending Establishment of a Register) authority is issued. If an adequate register does exist, and the individual is unable to qualify on it with a rating high enough to put him within reach of certification, that individual must be terminated even if his performance is acceptable.

In October 1967, new regulations were issued by CSC in response to legislative authorization for conversion of TAPER employees to career status. If the employee completes three years of service, is able to pass a non-competitive examination indicating his ability to perform, and has the recommendation of his agency, he may be appointed to full career status. Since the law became effective in February 1968, it is too early to assess the extent to which the approximately 20,000 employees eligible will be affected. But, since most TAPER employees probably occupy skilled technical and managerial positions, the new regulations are unlikely to have a significant effect on the disadvantaged.

Another set of problems in placing disadvantaged workers arises from the personnel ceilings established by the Bureau of the Budget. Each agency and its subdivisions are restricted in the number of personnel on their payroll, even if sufficient funds exist for additional positions. Thus an administrator may be faced with the choice of hiring a disadvantaged, unskilled individual or one with a college education.

A number of suggestions have been made for revising personnel ceilings to effect hiring of the disadvantaged. One would authorize hiring disadvantaged persons as a proportion of the total agency staff, without being subject to personnel ceilings. Another would assign a block of grades to the agency and require the administrator to determine the most effective staffing pattern (for example, a section with a block of 72 grades might be filled with 36 GS-2's, 9 GS-8's, or some appropriate staff combination that could best perform the section's mission).

Other alternatives include counting subprofessionals and trainees on a level proportionate to the number of staff journeymen; i,e., on a five to one basis (50 subprofessionals and 150 journeymen would be rated as a 160 rather than 200 for ceiling purposes). Finally, a suggestion has been made that trainees be hired for one year without counting against the ceiling and subsequently be included in the limit at progressively larger increments as they gain proficiency in their jobs.

In Washington, D.C., the hiring process is further complicated by a system of geographical allocation. Individuals from states below their alloted level in Washington positions have priority over local job applicants. For example, an applicant from some geographically remote area with a barely passing score of 70 is eligible for placement before the D.C. resident with a score of 100 on

the same register, a provision that works against the local disadvantaged, though it may assist those from outside Washington. However, this competition for Washington jobs will be reduced by a recent Commission ruling that worker trainee positions at the GS-1 level will be exempted from the geographical requirement.

Finally, there are many within Congress, the federal employee unions, and the government work force who fear the emphasis on hiring disadvantaged workers will subvert the merit system. Thus legislation introduced in 1967, specifying governmental responsibility to open civil service jobs to the disadvantaged, has attracted little support. Even President Johnson's proposal for special hiring authority for "disadvantaged" Vietnam veterans who agree to attend college along with their civil service work drew heavy criticism for its implied departure from merit system procedures. Since more than one-half of all government employees are ex-military personnel, some union representatives argued that adding a further veterans' preference would add to the built-in discrimination against women and non-veterans.

Announcement that the Post Office Department intended to lower standards for postal employees brought protests that the department was becoming a dumping ground for the aged, disabled, and criminals from the poverty programs. Some career officials privately characterized the plans as "make-work" projects which would destroy morale among longtime career employees.

PROGRAMS FOR SERVING THE DISADVANTAGED

The inherent conflict involved in absorbing disadvantaged workers into the federal merit system has led to a search for more attractive alternatives than setting aside jobs for the disadvantaged or hiring them outside merit procedures, both summarily rejected as creating a special class of employees. Job redesign has been the most popular. The process includes stripping all low skilled tasks from higher-level jobs and hiring the disadvantaged to perform these services. In this manner the disadvantaged would be accorded the opportunity for work "without creating special classes of employment, without lowering qualification standards, and within the normal framework of the merit system."

In addition to generalized programs of job redesign, special hiring authorities and training activities have been introduced and specific programs have been implemented to provide the less fortunate with job opportunities. The federal agencies have been authorized to provide employment opportunities within two contexts. First, agencies can hire disadvantaged applicants directly, but they must be hired by merit standards, paid from agency funds, and counted toward employee ceilings. Second, agencies can act as hosts for individuals referred from poverty programs, providing work experience and training opportunities without significant cost to agency and without the trainee counting as a part of its working force.

Operation MUST

The CSC has designated Operation MUST (Maximum Utilization of Skills and Training) as its prime program for extending federal employment opportunities to the disadvantaged. Broad guidelines for the program were issued in March 1966. In subsequent months, at least five additional CSC Bulletins were issued providing greater detail on these activities and describing specific programs to assist the disadvantaged. Yet, in December, nine months after the

initial announcement, another Bulletin entitled "Carrying Out Operation MUST" stated:

> "Recent contacts with agency field managers in various sections of the country have revealed that some have no knowledge of Operation MUST as a program. They seem to be especially uninformed about the need to pay special attention to job redesign, although this is the foundation for the other elements of MUST.
>
> "Accordingly, this bulletin clarifies the scope of MUST, emphasizes the need to take steps to carry out the program, and sets forth some of the considerations involved. *Agencies are asked to report on their progress in implementing Operation MUST by March 1, 1967."*

Despite the positive tone of the directive, agency personnel officers and poverty officials consider it indicative of shortcomings in CSC practices. They charge that the CSC has failed to provide the effective leadership necessary to assure that the federal government hires its share of the disadvantaged. While CSC administrative bulletins on Operation MUST enjoin agencies to become involved in battle, they charge, the Commission itself often awaits results back in the headquarters tent, either asking for reports as in the December 1966 directive or, as in the March 1966 launching of Operation MUST, closing with a cheery, "If there's anything we can do to help, feel free to call on us."

Agency personnel officials, under the pressures of day-to-day management and the burden of CSC regulatory reporting on routine matters, implement those CSC directives on which they feel high priority has been placed. Since they doubt that Operation MUST is in that category, it receives limited attention.

Nevertheless, there is much in the MUST program of real merit. The system is built around the concept of job redesign—the examination of positions and subsequent reallocation of tasks at the most efficient skill level. An important element is the creation of career ladders from the most elementary entry level positions to the most technical and professional slots. Not all new jobs would be opened to the disadvantaged but, through training or retraining, an individual at any level would have the opportunity to improve his position by moving up career ladders—making room at the bottom for less experienced workers.

A Commission assessment of agency participation in MUST found that most agencies had failed to perceive the real purpose of the program.[1] They viewed MUST simply as a special effort to give jobs to the disadvantaged. Thus, the emphasis was on re-engineering entry level jobs rather than on creating a hierarchy of jobs with appropriate career ladders. The CSC task force also noted that agencies had failed to achieve even their more limited goals.

[1] *Report of the Interbureau Task Force on Operation MUST,* (Washington: U.S. Civil Service Commission), April 1967, (mimeographed).

Though some accomplishments were cited, the report noted that most activities probably would have been carried out without MUST.

While insufficient time had elapsed to assess adequately agency responses to MUST, the task force was convinced that the program could not be successful without additional Commission support. The final task force complaint was the failure of agency headquarters to push MUST concepts, yet the report suggested that agency field managers be enjoined by headquarters staff to make a "special effort over and beyond what you are already doing so well."

Although the task force proposed a positive program for improving the implementation of Operation MUST, the situation was largely unchanged a year later. No concerted follow-up has been attempted. A checkpoint on the list of CSC inspection teams which periodically assess overall personnel performance of the agencies results in some monitoring of MUST, and these inspection teams report increasing awareness of these concepts. As recently as May 1968, however, a supervisor in one Washington agency, with job opportunities particularly pertinent to the disadvantaged, approached a CSC technician with a request for information on how he might implement a program to assist the disadvantaged. Though the agency was one of those most responsive to these problems, its personnel officials had failed to communicate the MUST message to operating sections.

Examining at the Lowest Levels

Effective examining for positions at the lowest end of the job ladder has been difficult for merit system officials. These entry level jobs require limited skills, usually performed on a repetitive basis and under close supervision, without the need for following complex directions or allocating time among series of tasks. Though these types of jobs seem ideal for those previously disadvantaged in the competition for jobs, the usual testing procedures based on individual competence have effectively precluded access to these positions. As CSC officials have become aware of the special needs of the disadvantaged, they have recognized that changes will be necessary if these individuals are to gain employment within the federal system. Many jobs which the disadvantaged could realistically fill are occupied by overqualified candidates who accept entry level positions below their potential in order to get into federal service. Although some use these low-skilled positions as a transition to more meaningful opportunities, others become disillusioned and quit, contributing to the high and expensive turnover in the lower grades.

These entry level positions have been designated as "A-level" or worker-trainee jobs by the CSC and are characterized by the simplicity of required tasks and the need for close worker supervision. In a sense, these jobs are preparatory: the employee can learn such good work habits as dependability,

punctuality, how to follow directions, and other basic requirements in the world of work. The failure of the usual employment evaluation criteria—abstract and verbal reasoning, prior work history, etc.—to assess worker potential was recognized and has been replaced by a more flexible examining method. No written test is required. A highly subjective, unassembled rating process was introduced, based generally on six elemental job requirements—"reliability and dependability, job readiness for A-level work, willingness to do uncomfortable work, ability to work safely, willingness to follow direct orders, and interest and motivation to work at the A-level." The application and rating forms were combined. CSC field personnel were encouraged to obtain the assistance of state employment offices, social welfare agencies, school counselors, and other local agencies as the situation required. Interviewers were authorized to provide assistance in completing the application and to employ needed investigators to verify applicant qualifications.

Commission spokesmen see A-level examining as, in effect, an inverse rating of client qualifications. For instance, if two people with similar characteristics, except for education and work experience, applied for the same low skilled position, the better prepared applicant would be rated below the less qualified candidate. This should serve to avoid placing overqualified candidates in menial jobs while giving those with less ambitious job aspirations the opportunity to prove themselves in entry level positions.

As a part of Operation MUST, the plan includes redesign of jobs "realistically geared" to the skills and abilities of potential applicants. The positions thus defined would serve both those of limited ability who might permanently occupy A-level jobs and those who could use them as a springboard to more attractive employment.

These special examining procedures for A-level jobs were first announced in August 1967. After an initial experimental period, the concept was broadened by an April 1968 CSC Bulletin that directed IAB's in cities having Concentrated Employment Programs to issue maintenance and service worker announcements for jobs in WB-1 through 4 and other appropriate low-skilled jobs in the general and postal schedules. These job opportunities can then be filled by applicants who qualify under the A-level or worker-trainee examining techniques.

Whether this inverse rating of applicant qualifications under the worker-trainee examination will be successful is a subject for future evaluation. Some observers doubt the ability of merit system officials to effectively matriculate disadvantaged workers into the system with these procedures, preferring instead some type of direct or referred hiring without going through the complicated examination, certification, and register-plucking process.

Training of the Lower Skilled Federal Employee

The major authorization for the training of federal employees is provided by the 1958 Government Employees Training Act (GETA). Its basic philosophical approach is one of self-motivated improvement. In the words of the Act, "it is necessary and desirable in the public interest that self-education, self-improvement and self-training by employees be supplemented and extended by Government-sponsored programs." As might be expected, most of the emphasis has been directed toward those with higher skills. The disadvantaged, because of lower educational levels, poor motivation, and general cultural handicaps, are not considered good candidates for self-improvement.

The commitment to federal training for the disadvantaged is also jeopardized by Congressional attitudes. In its mid-1967 report, the House Subcommittee on Manpower and Civil Service made some rather positive comments on overall improvements in GETA administration and implementation.[1] However, the report limited its discussion of training the disadvantaged to brief mention of adult basic education within the federal sector. Though the Subcommittee gave moderate commendation to these activities, it noted that nonparticipating employees viewed the program as a device to assist poorly educated employees in filling out forms to "get ahead in the Federal Civil Service." Thus, the Subcommittee cautioned participating agencies to make program objectives clearly understood. The report language also questioned the advisability of what it saw as subsidization of employee training and education activities obtainable in local public schools.

What the effect of these complaints will be on federal training for the disadvantaged remains to be seen. The best available data on federal training activities are those extrapolated from the Subcommittee report. Though the report does not identify specific training for the disadvantaged, CSC analysts estimated that of the one million persons who received at least 8 hours of formal classroom training in fiscal 1967, about 260,000 were at or below the GS-4 and equivalent wage board levels. It was estimated that $20 million of the $280 million annual expenditures for federal training activities was directed to those in the lower skill levels.[2] The CSC indicates that other formal and informal on-the-job training is given entry level employees but no data are available. Neither these estimates nor isolated success stories provide a useful assessment.

Operation MUST has provided a partial theoretical framework for improving training at the entry level. Its bulletins contain information on high school equivalency training, adult basic education, and authorization for training low level typists and stenographers. It is also important to remember that not all

[1] U.S.Congress, House Report No. 329, *Report Covering the Effectiveness of Implementation of the Government Employers Training Act,* Subcommittee on Manpower and Civil Service of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, 90th Cong., 1st Sess., 1967.

[2] "The Employment and Training of Federal Employees at the Lower Grades," *op. cit.*

training at the GS-1 through 4 level is necessarily directed to the disadvantaged. Where it is, it may be necessary to develop special training activities that will appeal to the less motivated.

An important element in providing these services to the disadvantaged is training supervisors to handle the special problems involved. A MUST bulletin outlines a course for the preparation of supervisors, and a brochure has been made available describing how supervisors can more effectively incorporate new workers into the structure, identify latent capabilities of employees, and provide information about training programs.

Civil Service Involvement in Manpower Programs

Federal government agencies have also been involved in providing work training sites for a variety of currently operating manpower programs as well as in direct hiring through the Summer Youth Opportunity Campaign and similar efforts. Most of the emphasis in work and training programs has been on youth activities such as the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the Vocational Education Work-Study program, and the Work-Study Program for college students. The Work Experience and Training Program is currently bringing a few needy adults into the federal service but it will expire June 30, 1969. Other Economic Opportunity Act programs may also contribute to wider participation of disadvantaged adults.

Youth Opportunity Campaign

The Summer Youth Opportunity Campaign had its beginnings in 1965, when both private and public employers were encouraged to provide one extra job during the summer for every 100 employees. In 1966, the Washington area federal agencies were asked to go even further and hire at the rate of three youths per 100 regular employees. During the first three years of the program, nearly 180,000 young people were hired. Of the 88,000 placed in 1967, over one-half were hired on the basis of competitive examinations. However, 43,000 were employed under special authority on the basis of educational or economic need and without competitive procedures.

President's Stay-in-School-Campaign

Each year since 1965, the Civil Service Commission has also issued authority following the summer employment program for a Presidential Stay-in-School Campaign encouraging youth to continue their education. Through this program part-time agency employment is given to students who require assistance to remain in school.

A special Schedule A hiring authority was implemented. The Stay-in-School

program provides needy students with 16 hours of work per week, if they are able to maintain their academic standing in secondary or higher learning institutions. These positions are above and beyond work-study programs available under Vocational Education or OEO programs. Students are special employees of the hiring agencies and reimbursed from agency funds. There is an average of about 16,000 young people enrolled in federal agencies throughout the nation during the academic year.

Work-Study Program of Vocational Education

A federal agency which becomes involved in the Vocational Education Work-Study program acts as a host rather than doing the actual hiring. Students are selected by appropriate Board of Education administrators. The federal agencies provide training programs for students who may work 15 hours a week as long as they don't earn more than $45 a month or $350 during the academic year. Wages paid to enrollees are drawn from Vocational Education funds and the host agency has no financial responsibility. There are only about 300 students enrolled in participating federal agencies nationwide.

Economic Opportunity Act Work and Training Programs

Federal agency participation in Economic Opportunity Act work and training programs is generally limited to a host basis with 90 percent of the enrollee wages paid by the contractor, and the federal agency essentially providing a 10 percent "in kind" contribution. Enrollees are chosen by the contractors and placed in sponsoring agencies. During 1967, an average level of only about 9,000 Neighborhood Youth Corps enrollees served in federal agencies.

The College Work Study program, introduced under EOA but since transferred to education legislation, provides not only employment and income but an opportunity to gain meaningful work experience related to academic training. Applicants are selected by participating colleges and their wages are paid from Office of Education funds. CSC directives initially cautioned federal agencies not to compete with community action agencies or other local organizations for the services of College Work Study enrollees. Though this restriction was subsequently eased, federal agencies have only employed about 500 of these enrollees at any one time, since the colleges use most of the students themselves. The program is no longer limited to the poor, and it is doubtful that it contributes significantly to the education and employment of the disadvantaged.

Federal agencies have also been authorized to act as hosts for enrollees under the Work Experience and Training Program. This program, administered by state and local welfare agencies, is designed to assist both individuals on

public assistance and other adult poor to become employable. Work Experience enrollees do not count against either budgets or personnel ceilings but the participation of federal agencies has been limited, with the 1967 enrollment averaging about 900 persons.

Three other programs authorized under amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act also have a direct bearing on federal agency employment of the disadvantaged. The so-called Special Impact and Operation Mainstream programs provide low-income individuals with community improvement work opportunities and to a limited extent may use federal agencies as host training and work experience sites. More applicable to federal agencies is the New Careers program. State, local, and private non-profit institutions act as contractors and are responsible for the necessary supportive services as well as the development of career ladders. New career opportunities must be in health. education, welfare, and related human service functions. Federal agencies may participate by the provision of direct employment or modified work sites on a host basis. Though opportunities exist in the federal service, there is as yet no significant evidence of federal participation in any of the three programs.

THE WASHINGTON, D. C. EXPERIENCE

No area in the country can offer a better test of the federal government's commitment to hire the disadvantaged than the nation's capital. Within the federal city and its environs, nearly 30 percent of all workers are employed in the federal establishment. With the addition of state and local governments, two out of every five employed workers are classified as public servants.

The federal government's personnel regulations affect more than just the 320,000 employees on federal payrolls because many District of Columbia agencies are also covered by Civil Service rules and regulations. The area's manpower needs emphasize white-collar occupations whose verbal and conceptual skills require above average education. Only 5 percent of the area labor force is employed in manufacturing or fabrication activities compared to a national average of 30 percent.

A further indication of the federal influence in D.C. is the consistently high employment levels in the area. With the stabilizing influence of federal employment, the over-all unemployment rate has rarely varied from the 2.0-2.5 percent range. Nonwhite unemployment rates for the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) are only about 50 percent higher than those of whites, rather than the double or triple level typical of most large cities.

However, data for the SMSA give an overly sanguine view. The suburbs are among the most affluent in the nation, but only 7 percent of their population is Negro. A third of the SMSA residents reside in the District of Columbia which is 63 percent Negro. The unemployment rate in the District Columbia is unofficially estimated to be twice as high as in the suburbs, with some areas having 7 to 10 percent unemployment rates and subemployment ratios as high as 60 percent in some census tracts. Though the District has only three-fifths of the area's labor force, it has seven out of ten of the unemployed. Poor housing and schools, inadequate transportation, rising crime, and delinquency affect the District more than the surrounding suburbs.

Since the White House and the Capitol are within a short walk of poverty neighborhoods, it is not surprising that the District's war on poverty is an

especially enriched one. Whenever new programs are announced, Washington, D.C., is usually among the selected cities. Given these facts and the presence of the Civil Service Commission headquarters, the federal city should be ahead of all others in offering civil service jobs to the disadvantaged.

Institutional Framework

In no other large city in the country is it possible to identify one employer responsible for employing 30 percent of the area work force. Though there are nearly 40 federal and a dozen District agencies with an even larger number of personnel departments, nearly all must comply with a single set of regulations administered by the Civil Service Commission.

The personnel management practices of the District of Columbia government fall into four categories. (1) Such departments as Public Welfare, Corrections, Civil Defense, and the Juvenile Court are in the competitive (federal) service. Their 4,000 employees are required to abide by all Civil Service Commission rules and regulations, including examination and certification. (2) The police and fire department employees are also appointed in accordance with CSC rules and regulations but are not eligible for competitive status. (3) Another group, comprising about 12,000 of the 30,000 District employees, operates under "joint regulations" issued by the D.C. government and CSC. Though recruitment, examination, registration, and hiring requirements parallel those throughout the federal service, their employees are also not eligible for competitive status. (4) The last group includes the judicial, public utility and education agencies which are totally exempted from civil service procedures.

Role of the Civil Service Commission

The Washington programs for placement of the disadvantaged face problems found throughout the country plus a few which are unique to the area. Proximity to the seat of policy-making has both positive and negative implications. There are times when the CSC appears more responsive to local needs and other times when it retreats into the stance of a national institution which is not responsible for local problems.

Therefore, the consequence of the Commission's presence in Washington and its effect on federal hiring are hotly debated points. Some critics argue that the Commission has not been responsive to the needs of the area and has sometimes frustrated attempts to hire the disadvantaged. In 1967, for example, CSC authorized the payment of travel costs to Washington for typist trainees at the GS-1 level. Local poverty officials argued that such monies could be spent more propitiously in preparing their clients to qualify for these

trainee positions. Commission officials countered with the charge that the poverty agency had failed to provide meaningful training for positions when agencies had been willing to participate. Though few trainees actually came to Washington under this authority, it nonetheless provided a source of contention.

The Civil Service Commission's response to the Concentrated Employment Program also disheartened many. Despite endorsement of CEP and a description of the programs in which federal agencies could participate, the major CSC directive on the program contained this caveat: "There are no special appointing authorities for this purpose." Thus, though CEP enrollees would obviously be disadvantaged, the regular merit system hiring procedures would prevail.

The support given local poverty administrators by CSC and the federal agencies is again of mixed proportions. Most agency spokesmen claim doing everything possible considering the limited number of qualified candidates among the disadvantaged and the still fewer positions they could adequately fill. Greater participation is dismissed because of personnel and budget ceilings or the obvious inability of the disadvantaged to pass civil service examinations.

Even when the CSC has provided authority for circumventing procedures, agencies have been reluctant to use them. In early 1967, the Commission issued a directive permitting agencies to hire critically needed clerical workers with less than adequate qualifications and to provide in-house training to bring them up to a satisfactory skill level. Although the local poverty agency offered assistance in screening applicants, preparing appropriate training, and related matters, not one of the eight agencies approached agreed to accept. Some blame CSC for not following up on agency utilization of their authority.

Some bureaucratic obstacles have been removed with the transfer of most operating problems to the purview of the local Interagency Boards. The Washington IAB (WIAB) had been very active since September 1966 and has given local agencies a good deal of latitude in direct hiring of workers who could qualify for merit appointment without having to go through complicated civil service hiring procedures. There has also been an active liaison between WIAB, the federal agencies, and local poverty agencies to implement programs for the disadvantaged. Examples of success stories include the placement of the MDTA computer technician graduates noted earlier. That experience devolved partially from a breakdown in interagency communications. Therefore, at WIAB urging, the Commission was included among the signatories to the Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System agreement, expanding CSC potential for local participation in federal manpower program activities.

The Attitudes of Federal and District Agencies

Whatever the attitude of CSC, each federal agency is ultimately

responsible for its own staffing pattern. Within broad guidelines, ceiling controls, and budgetary limitations, agencies determine the manpower required to carry out their missions. Individual recruitment is largely an agency prerogative and, though the certification process is often arduous, if an agency desires someone, it can usually get him off the register. Some agency personnel administrators refuse to hire the disadvantaged, while others willingly accept the benefits of a free work force on a host basis but are unwilling to make permanent opportunities available. On the other hand, some agencies have enthusiastically accepted host assignments, and have sought aggressively to incorporate the workers into their regular work force. Commitment to hire disadvantaged workers varies depending on the predilection of administrators, the types of workers required, and the extent of the agency's involvement in the administration of funds for human resource development. Thus the Labor Department and the Office of Economic Opportunity tend toward greater participation because of their human resource development activities, while the National Institute of Health finds disadvantaged workers suitable for some of the less skilled tasks involved in health research.

Federal agencies have not really made members of the disadvantaged population aware of employment opportunities. However, with the growing commitment to hire disadvantaged employees, agencies have begun to use the outreach facilities of community action agencies, locally represented by the United Planning Organization (UPO).

In Washington, with the advent of the Concentrated Employment Program (WCEP), a number of efforts were directed toward federal and district agencies. The single most important placement vehicle for WCEP has been the Job Fair. Efforts to build packaged personnel programs through which WCEP could place clients directly in predeveloped jobs after first screening the enrollees and providing training have been unsuccessful. The alternative has been to bring personnel recruiters into the ghettos on a periodic basis to interview WCEP enrollees in surroundings with which the latter are more comfortable.

Other relevant WCEP components are New Careers, Special Impact, and the several work experience and training elements. No federal agency currently participates in the New Careers Program, although five district agencies, some of which operate under Civil Service regulations, are committed for a total of 200 New Careers slots.

WCEP's involvement with Neighborhood Youth Corps projects is primarily directed at placing youth with the Department of Defense. NYC-DOD recruits after a three month remedial program are placed in work experience sites with the Department. After nine months with the agency, enrollees are expected to pass regular tests to qualify for GS-1 through 3 positions. Though their programs are not as well structured as WCEP, other agencies provide training sites directed toward permanent status. The on-the-job training program funded under the Manpower Development and Training Act may become more important with the recent authorization for federal agencies to accept OJT enrollees.

A Work and Training Opportunity Center (WTOC) is administered by the D.C. Department of Public Welfare and is funded under the Economic Opportunity Act's Work Experience and Training Program. Clients are selected from welfare rolls with about 200 trainees selected every two months and given pre-vocational orientation prior to full-time vocational training and/or work experience assignments. Government agencies participate in WTOC activities both by providing work sites on a host basis and in final job placement. Of the total of 300 individuals placed in permanent positions during 1967, half were in the federal sector.

The other major program is the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) which was patterned after the much publicized Philadelphia program. Trainees do not receive allowance payments or wages from the sponsoring agency. Though the program was originally conceived as being primarily directed to the private sector, about one-third of its 300 placements in 1967 were made in federal and District agencies.

Another development having important implications is the possible exchange of outstation personnel between WIAB and the District Employment Service. At present, there is little CSC utilization of Employment Service facilities and capabilities. However, with the increasing emphasis on the Human Resources Development (HRD) component, the Employment Service could become a valuable source of disadvantaged workers for federal employment. Its potential was enhanced in April 1968 with the formation of a Manpower Administration for the District of Columbia. Headed by a District Manpower Administrator, the office was assigned the responsibility for coordinating all local manpower programs.

Probably the most measurable aspect of federal participation in hiring the disadvantaged has been its role in WCEP Job Fairs. While many agencies have attended and hired at these Job Fairs, there is evidence of less than wholehearted support for this activity. Some reluctance can be traced to budgetary and personnel ceilings but, for the most part, agency personnel people regard Job Fairs simply as another element in their search for employees. WCEP job developers complained that they devoted a considerable portion of their time to persuading agency representatives to participate without any definite commitment to hire. The CSC liaison man noted a marked reduction in agency participation when other duties precluded his making phone calls requesting assistance prior to each Job Fair.

About one-third of WCEP's nearly 1,500 placements between June 1967 and March 1968 were made at the Job Fairs. The fact that nearly 40 percent of total WCEP placements came from the public sector suggests that federal, district, and other government agencies bore their fair share of the load. The Federal Employment Program (FEP) was the WCEP component designed to attract federal agency participation in the hiring of the disadvantaged. FEP was conceived as a package of job development and personnel services designed to demonstrate the practicality of Operation MUST procedures including extensive job redesign and personnel upgrading. Despite this special effort

to increase the effectiveness of client placement, WCEP found that less than two-fifths of public hiring was completed through job development programs, while more than three-fifths came through the Job Fairs. For private employers the reverse was true. Nearly nine out of ten persons hired through WCEP came from job development activities, while Job Fairs accounted for only 12 percent.

Only a small proportion of government hires were initially placed in career positions. Most obtained an excepted 700-hour appointment or a not-to-exceed-one-year commitment. However, three out of five of these appointees were subsequently converted to permanent status. With the development of the worker-trainee examination especially designed to assist the disadvantaged worker, it appears that there will be even less difficulty in getting those employees who are hired into a permanent civil service status.

There have been examples of agency willingness to participate in job development and training activities but they are exceptions. The National Park Service operated a program involving 15 Special Impact trainees that included giving training and work experience as warehousemen and metal fence erectors, in addition to part-time remedial education. UPO provided enrollee stipends and remedial training but the agency provided supervision and skill training and made equipment available for the project. No provision was made for transition to regular employment, as it was known from the beginning that enrollees would have to be placed in private industry.

The FEP's experience with the Post Office has gone through an interesting transition during the past year. Though often noting a continuing need for personnel in the Washington area, the Department resisted UPO offers to provide applicants. Subsequently, they committed themselves to 25 WCEP enrollees and accepted UPO's assistance but found difficulties in getting candidates through the regular testing procedures. When test conditioning was provided, the official merit system reaction was one of consternation at the apparent effort to subvert the validity of the testing process. Discussions resulted in the program's continuance, including the amendment of a rule which required an ineligible rating unless the applicant had a passing score on the first part of the test, even if he passed on the basis of his total score. These experiences may also have contributed to the Post Office's request for a special, national, low level hiring authority. Unfortunately, only partial authority was granted, although this may be somewhat offset by the implementation of the worker-trainee concept.

However, these two case histories are not typical of FEP experience. While small programs for placement in clerical occupations may be initiated in the Departments of Agriculture and Transportation, agencies have generally refused to accept the more important FEP package of personnel services. This refusal has resulted from restrictive civil service practices, the failure of FEP to effectively present its case, and agency unwillingness to accept the basic philosophical changes required to make the program work.

The experience of New Careers within WCEP has been a little more

successful. Two of the five District agencies participating fall within the purview of Civil Service regulations and, in a sense, indicate Commission acceptance of the concept. Each agency has signed a separate contract, some of which are so loosely worded that much will depend upon the good faith of the agency. The training component of New Careers will be handled by a private contractor. Since the enrollees are not a part of the agency staff during the first year, a firm transition commitment would be necessary to validate the legislative requirement that jobs lead to "genuine opportunities for promotion and advancement." However, Civil Service regulations restrict the ability of agencies to convert trainees to regular employees unless special arrangements are made.

In February 1968, this problem came to a head when some New Careers spokesmen argued for immediate institutional change to assure a convertibility procedure. CSC proponents insisted on continuation of merit system hiring but offered to use A-level examinations for human service aides. Some agencies are reported to have second thoughts and to be considering withdrawal of their commitments, but none has done so as yet.

The Census Bureau once requested indigenous census takers to find the estimated 10 percent of the Negro population who escape them in the large city ghettos. Personnel regulations required the use of GS-3 enumerators. Through careful screening, 13 were found to take the test, and all failed. Despite the better than average ability of these enrollees and their intimate knowledge of the inner city, the specific problems of reading map symbols and coping with culturally biased exams frustrated their efforts to pass the tests. Through UPO intervention, two enrollees were hired, but they subsequently left the Bureau.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps-Department of Defense contract trained 170 young people between July 1967 and February 1968, 20 of whom became permanent employees. There were rather extensive delays in developing hiring criteria and lower level entry standards. However, the April 1968 announcement of the worker-trainee examination is now anticipated to alleviate many problems. The pilot project begun in Washington is to be expanded to 44 cities with an enrollment of some 7,500 young people. Basic education and skill training are to be provided on a host basis by DOD for a nine month period with a specific commitment to hire candidates, most of whom will be screened through the worker-trainee exam before they are brought into the program.

Other programs with the Defense Department have been less rewarding. For a considerable period of time UPO transported, supervised, and gave other services to provide the Fort Meade Commissary with young people from their pre-vocational program. These young men carried grocery bags for customers after CSC ruled the Commissary could not retain part-time help for this purpose. No compensation, except customer tips, was available. Though UPO argued that these services saved the military funds, repeated efforts to attain

even rudimentary participation, such as hot meals or surplus raincoats, were rebuffed, and the program was discontinued.

At the conclusion of the 1967 summer employment campaign, the D.C. government proposed hiring disadvantaged youth at the minimum wage in vacant positions at the lowest grade. The differential between $1.40 and the usual hourly wage would be used to train these youngsters for ultimate placement in government jobs and in private industry. Without the necessary CSC and Congressional approval, the plan died.

More recently, the District government proposed to accept a number of applicants who had failed examinations and, without identification, place them with those who were successful. The comparative performance of the two groups would be evaluated over a year. By then retesting these employees, the validity of the examination process could be checked. The plan is currently being considered by the Civil Service Commission.

The federal sector has taken more than its porportionate share of the total number of placements made by local agencies serving the disadvantaged. This fact is particularly significant since the push to hire the disadvantaged has coincided with an effort to reduce agency personnel levels as a part of the 1968 economy drive. In the Spring of 1968, UPO was forced to finally discontinue Job Fairs because federal agencies made it clear that they would not participate while the freeze on federal hiring continued.

But even without tight budgets and rigid personnel ceilings, most Washington agencies probably would have not been avid supporters of a hire-the-disadvantaged movement. Instead, hiring has largely resulted from a need to fill low-skilled positions in a tight labor market and under these circumstances, federal agencies have been willing to use poverty agencies as additional sources of job applicants. With few exceptions, there has been little evidence of agency willingness to take advantage of special hiring programs made available by social service agencies or to provide special assistance to upgrade the skills of those disadvantaged workers they have hired.

The worker-trainee recruitment concept recognizes the need to bring the disadvantaged into employment on the basis of their potential rather than requiring proven achievement. The contribution of this approach will be limited as long as the current severe limits on new hiring exist. Even then, considering the low-level nature of the jobs involved, it remains to be seen whether the primary motivation is jobs for the disadvantaged or recruitment for unattractive jobs.

THE SAN FRANCISCO FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

San Francisco and Washington, D.C., offer useful comparisons and contrasts in their approaches to employing the disadvantaged in the federal Civil Service. Like Washington, San Francisco is primarily a "paper" city though as a "capital" of private enterprise rather than a federal or state capital. Again, in contrast to the federal city with its diverse, *ad hoc*, and unrelated efforts on behalf of Civil Service employment for the disadvantaged, San Francisco emerged with a single, coherent, and largely successful program which has already had national impact. While the numbers involved have been few, the San Francisco experience provides a better model of what can be accomplished in more normal labor markets than Washington's, given adequate political commitment.

The coherence of the San Francisco program is even more surprising in that it began on a crash basis in response to a series of political accidents and a civil crisis. The experiment began at a time when a strict hiring freeze bound most federal agencies, and when personnel ceilings for all agencies were expected to be lowered rather than raised. Yet almost overnight, startled regional Civil Service Commission administrators found themselves casting aside the hallowed merit system and hiring more than 1,300 hard-core men and women "off-the streets" without benefit of examination, either assembled or unassembled. Within two years, not only were significant numbers of disadvantaged persons employed, but three important concepts all relevant to the private as well as public hiring of the disadvantaged had been tested.

The first was the "hire now—train on-the-job" concept. The federal government had been advocating this practice in the private sector, but had not asked its own agencies to sample the same medicine. While many federal administrators had little patience with the "merit systems" employed by private industry, few had viewed their own merit system as a barrier to the employment of the disadvantaged. A crack appeared in that barrier in San Francisco and a sizable number of the city's disadvantaged were placed in federal jobs. However, the merit system was not bypassed altogether. Most of the disadvantaged workers in the program were given training on the job and, to become

permanent employees, had to qualify for their positions within a year.

The second concept tested was the validity of the examination process as it applied to low-grade entry jobs. A job performance comparison was made between those who entered the San Francisco Post Office outside the merit system and a control group of those who entered through regular Civil Service appointments with results favorable to the former. As has been mentioned before, the Civil Service Commission is now considering just such a proposal from the D.C. government. In San Francisco, the experiment has been in operation for almost two years.

Perhaps the most instructive aspect of the San Francisco experience was the role played by political power in overcoming seemingly insuperable obstacles. Civil Service Commission regulations, agency reluctance, hiring freezes, and personnel ceilings fell by the wayside when the President of the United States, in answer to an embattled mayor's plea, put the weight of his office behind the San Francisco program. In this respect, the federal government is not much different from private industry. Successful job development programs in the private sector depend on the direct involvement of company presidents and the bypassing of personnel departments and traditional hiring policies. The appeal in the case of San Francisco was not made to the Civil Service Commission or to the personnel department of federal agencies, but to the President of the United States. Without his approval, the program probably would never have been started.

How It Happened

The San Francisco program now has a long, bureaucratic title: "Training Upgrading for Newly-Appointed Civil Service Employees in the San Francisco Bay Area." In the beginning, there was no title and no comprehensive plan; there was only a mandate to put people to work as fast as possible. Six factors helped bring about the mandate: (1) the nature of the San Francisco job market; (2) San Francisco's inability to receive what it considered to be its fair share of poverty and manpower funds; (3) a riot in the Hunter's Point area of the city; (4) the Mayor's plea to the President of the United States; (5) the appointment of a non-career federal administrator to the chairmanship of a Presidential Task Force; and (6) the endorsement of the White House.

The skills in active demand in San Francisco reflect a shift from the relatively balanced industrial/commercial pattern of a decade ago to that of a 'headquarters' city. New industrial starts have almost disappeared; in fact, there appears to have been a net loss of some 20,000 industrial jobs since 1960. If, therefore, San Francisco's unemployed expect to find jobs within the city, channels must be opened into the white collar world of finance, trade, services, real estate, insurance, and government. Nearly one-fifth of San Francisco's 500,000 workers are employed by government; 30,000, or six percent of them by the federal government. The proportion is small relative to Washington; yet federal employment is an obvious "port of entry" to the white-collar world for a group so much the concern of current national policy.

However, as San Francisco's largest single source of employment, the record of various levels of the government in hiring the disadvantaged had not been

impressive. Black leaders had described the city's Civil Service as a "white ghetto," and the State of California could boast of few positive efforts to bring members of minority groups into non-subsidized employment. The federal government's record was no more adequate.

Following the Hunter's Point riot, however, the federal government was given the chance to set an example.

Residents of Oakland, California often complained about living in the shadow of one of the world's most famous cities. In the distorted world of poverty, however, the situation was reversed. Since the Watts riot in Los Angeles, Oakland had been considered "hot"; and federal funds had poured into the city at a rate greater than its size warranted. San Francisco's poverty warriors looked enviously across the Bay as an MDTA skills center was erected, an Economic Development Administration program launched, and poverty funds supplemented by grants from the Ford Foundation. San Francisco, which had no skills center and did not qualify for EDA, felt it had been discriminated against by both the federal government and the foundations. San Francisco's Neighborhood Youth Corps and MDTA on-the-job training allotments had been less than those of Oakland, even though San Francisco had nearly twice the population.

The crowning blow came in 1966 when because of a cutback in MDTA funds, the State of California decided to invest the majority of its MDTA institutional funds in the existing skills centers. This meant that Los Angeles and Oakland, both with skills centers, would receive most of the State's MDTA funds. San Francisco and other cities would have to suffer the consequences. Rumblings were heard from the Mayor and poverty officials, but they didn't reach a crescendo until September 18, 1966, when a riot erupted in Hunter's Point, one of San Francisco's most deprived and segregated neighborhoods.

After all the federal worry about Oakland, and perhaps partially because of it, a riot broke out in "safe" San Francisco. As riots go, it was rather mild, but it did serve to focus attention on the needs of the city and brought the Mayor out fighting for a program to help ease the plight of the city's poor. It brought about the establishment of new organizations in the Hunter's Point area, one of which was the Young Men for Action—a group which would have a good deal to tell federal executives about the merit system and the poor.

The Mayor ventured into the ghetto area during the riot and was hooted down whenever he attempted to speak. He returned to his office and made his appeal via television. He castigated labor and management for discriminatory employment policies, and called on the entire community to join in a program to find jobs for San Francisco's poor. He then sent a telegram to the President of the United States in which he demanded that cuts in San Francisco's MDTA allotment be restored, and asked the President for full federal assistance during San Francisco's emergency. The Mayor then established a "Job Center" close to City Hall and asked all San Francisco employers to phone their job orders into the Center, acting on his conviction that the causes

of the riot could only be attacked successfully by an immediate full-scale hunt for jobs which would take rioters off the streets and place them in productive employment.

At first glance, the task force appointed by the President in response to the Mayor's request did not appear promising. Its membership was almost identical with that of the Federal Executive Board; that is, regional directors of the major federal agencies in the San Francisco Bay area. Over the years, the role of the FEB had been to serve as an information exchange between top regional administrators. Although it had conducted a few studies of government programs in Oakland and San Francisco, it had never engaged in an action program of any kind, nor did it consider itself an action-oriented group.

Despite the similarity in membership, the task force proved to be quite different from the FEB. The President appointed as Chairman of the task force the regional director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, a non-career federal administrator who took his job literally and refused to consider the merit system and other traditional practices as sacrosanct.

To the surprise of the regional administrators who made up the body of the task force, the Chairman announced that the first order of business would be to canvass all federal agencies operating in the area, to effect actual hiring of persons in distressed areas on a substantial scale. What about Civil Service regulations, hiring freezes, budget restrictions? The Chairman brushed these considerations aside. With White House backing, all obstacles could be overcome. Despite scepticism about hiring ghetto-bred youth right off the streets into federal agencies, a federal employment program for the disadvantaged was to be put into operation immediately.

At the second meeting of the task force, the Chairman invited the Young Men for Action from Hunter's Point to talk to the federal officials. This group was formed during the Hunter's Point riot to act as peacemakers. Now that the riot was over, they wanted to tell the Establishment what it was like to live in a ghetto, and what they believed would cure the ills of their neighborhood. Most were school dropouts, many had arrest records, a few had convictions, and all had been through at least one government training or work experience program.

Their message was simple: "We need jobs." They told the task force that they were tired of training programs that lead nowhere, NYC programs that paid substandard wages, and promises from both private and public employers. They asked the federal officials to give preference to the poor over "hippies" and other "white dropouts" who score well on examinations. They bluntly told the regional administrators, including the regional director of the Civil Service Commission, that the examinations given for most entry level federal jobs bore no relationship to the work required by the job.

With the experience fresh in the minds of task force members, the Chairman pointed out that the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce had responded to the Mayor's plea by pledging 2,000 jobs for the poor of the city. Could the federal establishment do less? As it turned out, most of the 2,000

jobs pledged by the Chamber never materialized, while 1,000 placements were made in federal agencies. Nevertheless, the argument served its purpose at the time, and the task force went to work on a crash program for the employment of the disadvantaged in federal agencies.

A President's Committee on Manpower team which had been working on coordination of manpower programs in the San Francisco Bay area for five months prior to the Hunter's Point riot, was assigned the job of working out the details of the program. The Civil Service Commission agreed to lend personnel to the PCOM team during the course of its assignment. Regional directors contacted their Washington offices for hiring authority, and the Chairman presented his program to the White House.

The proposal submitted by the task force to the White House was not the standard plea for more training funds or work experience programs. Rather, it was a proposal that called on federal agencies to provide direct employment for the disadvantaged citizens of San Francisco.

The nature of the job market made a breakthrough in white collar employment in government imperative. The fact that San Francisco had been shortchanged in its manpower and poverty funds, and that the so-called "safe" city had suffered a riot, made it possible for the Mayor to demand, not request, special federal efforts in behalf of the city. Finally, because San Francisco was in a state of emergency, it was necessary to adopt a plan which could be put into effect immediately, and which would be a visible sign of positive action to the residents of the city's ghettos. For all these reasons, the White House backed the proposal and saw to it that hiring authorities and job slots were made available.

The importance of the White House endorsement cannot be overestimated. There was no doubt of the Civil Service Commission's opposition to the program nor of the reluctance of most federal agencies to participate. Without the endorsement of the White House, the proposal would have been quickly shelved. One year later, when the Federal Executive Board proposed an extension of the program under the Concentrated Employment Program, the Civil Service Commission turned down the proposal for 500 Schedule A positions in the San Francisco Post Office, even before it was formally submitted. With San Francisco's riot a year-old memory, the heat was off, and there was no pressure on the Commission to continue the program. Without the personal intervention of the Postmaster General, the San Francisco experiment would have died.

The Program

The San Francisco Federal Employment Program can be divided into two phases: the President's task force phase, and the Concentrated Employment Program phase. The first is the "cut-and-paste" program which was put together in an emergency to help ease tensions in the city. The second, which is

still in operation, is a much smaller and more carefully-planned version of the first.

Following the Hunter's Point riot, the immediate goal of the President's task force was to place as many disadvantaged workers in federal jobs as possible. In the beginning, little thought was given to the training of these workers, or to any supportive services which might help them succeed on the job. The first order of business was to achieve the authority to hire; the second, to canvass the federal agencies for job orders; and the third, to develop a mechanism to insure the referral of the hard-core to the job openings. A total of 1,000 disadvantaged workers were placed in jobs through 700-hour appointments, and NTE (Not to Exceed) one-year appointments. All major agencies, with the exception of the Department of Labor, participated in the program.

Unfortunately, no records were kept on the approximately 500 people who were placed more or less at random with various federal agencies. The remainder were placed *en bloc* with the Post Office so that reasonably good data are available on their experience. Because the local Post Office register had been exhausted, the Civil Service Commission granted the San Francisco Post Office 500 NTE one-year appointments. The men and women who filled these positions were told that they must qualify by Civil Service examination within the year or be separated. They were also required to take the examination once every ninety days, or until qualified.

An experimental and demonstration project was funded by the Labor Department to help the new Post Office employees pass the Civil Service examination. Classes were held five days a week for two hours a day at the work site coinciding with the various reporting times of the employees. No time was allowed from the employees' regularly-assigned duties; thus, all students were faced with at least a ten-hour day. The trainees were taught simple arithmetic up to and including algebra. They were also taught communications skills.

Because the task force phase of the San Francisco Federal Employment Program evolved out of a crash effort to respond to a crisis in the ghetto, there were many deficiencies.

1. Initial attendance at most of the classes was sporadic. This resulted from scheduling classes for trainees either prior to or after eight hours of employment. A later shift of classes to a "swing" period during regular work hours resulted in a substantial improvement in class attendance.
2. The lack of supportive services affected the program adversely.
3. The lack of a pre-training orientation program for trainees, as well as for Post Office supervisors, contributed to a higher than necessary dropout rate.
4. Inadequate records were kept to make a detailed job performance comparison between those who entered the federal service outside the merit system and those who received competitive appointments.

Despite these deficiencies, the program proved to be a successful one. In January 1967, prior to the commencement of the classes, an examination was

given in which 273 of the 500 employees took part. Only 13 passed the examination. Approximately one month after classes began, 243 trainees took the examination, and 92 qualified. A total of 513 employees received training under the MDTA portion of the program. Of these, 416 took the examination and 263 passed. Less than $60,000, or an average of $235 per success, was spent on the program. In addition, 230 of the original 500 employees found other employment, at least in part, as a result of the training they received while employed by the Post Office.

At the end of the year, a comparison was made between the experience of 489 of the disadvantaged persons hired without regard to selection standards and a control group of 103 selected from the regular Civil Service register to work together in the same occupations. The results are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AFTER ONE YEAR

	Experimental (N=489)		Control (N=103)	
	Men (N=216)	Women (N=273)	Men (N=57)	Women (N=46)
Still employed	38%	71%	42%	65%
Terminated/abandoned job	29	13	14	15
Voluntary resignation	21	12	33	11
Other	12	4	11	9
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Still employed	57%		52%	

Source: Report prepared for the U.S. Civil Service Commission by David Futransky and Donald Wagner, "On the Job Follow-Up of Postal Clerks Hired in San Francisco Without Employment Tests," Standards Division, Bureau of Policies and Standards, July 1968, (mimeographed).

Table 2

PERFORMANCE AS RATED BY SUPERVISORS

	Experimental		Control	
	Men (N=48)	Women (N=138)	Men (N=12)	Women (N=25)
Adequate or better	50%	80%	83%	100%
Poor	50	20	17	–
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent adequate or better	72%		95%	

Source: "On the Job Follow-Up of Postal Clerks Hired in San Francisco Without Employment Tests," *op. cit.*

The retention rate did not differ significantly for the two groups, nor did the extent to which the two groups of women were either terminated by their supervisors or simply abandoned their positions. However, the proportion of men terminated or who abandoned their jobs was twice as high for the disadvantaged group as for the controls. As might be expected, these tended to be concentrated among the younger, single males with the least education. Within the experimental group of both men and women, those with arrest records had substantially poorer retention and performance records. The performance of the experimental group was clearly worse than that of the control group. However, the experimental group was younger, blacker, less educated, less experienced, and from more disadvantaged backgrounds; while no special provisions had been made to prepare them or their supervisors in any way to shield them from normal pressures and discipline in the workplace. Observers therefore concluded that the fact that over two-thirds of even the group receiving the very lowest test scores still performed adequately on the job was more significant than the fact that they had not done so well as the less disadvantaged. One comment is particularly relevant to the theme of this paper.

> "The distinction we are making between the success of the Control Group and the achievement of the Experimental Group is essentially that between the concepts of 'selection' and 'utilization.' If the primary concern is *to select* the best available, the register is the place to go. But if we accept the responsibility *to utilize* segments of the labor force who heretofore would not have been considered, we see that many of these persons can perform satisfactorily in socially useful jobs."[1]

Because of the success of the task force program, the sponsor of the San Francisco Concentrated Employment Program enlisted the aid of the Federal Executive Board in developing jobs for CEP enrollees in federal agencies. A contract was signed with a private consultant to aid the FEB in this job development effort. As part of this program, the FEB proposed a continuation of the Post Office program, only this time under far more controlled conditions. These included:

1. The creation of 500 Schedule A positions in the San Francisco Post Office for enrollees of the San Francisco CEP.
2. That no priority be given to employees in these positions for advancement to permanent postal positions.
3. That a full complement of 500 be maintained during the period of the project.
4. That such appointments not exceed one year without the permission of the Civil Service Commission and the Post Office, and that such permission

[1]Report prepared for the U.S. Civil Service Commission by David Futransky and Donald Wagner, "On the Job Follow-up of Postal Clerks Hired in San Francisco Without Employment Tests," Standards Division, Bureau of Policies and Standards, July 1968, (mimeographed).

be granted only if the enrollee had qualified for a permanent position and had reasonable expectation of being called in the near future.

5. That basic education and preparation for examination taking be part of the project.

6. That follow-up and data collection already built into the CEP be used as a source of information to evaluate the project.

7. That priority for entry into these positions be given to disadvantaged veterans.

8. That such employees had to take the Civil Service examination at least once every 90 days to remain employed.

The proposal was prepared in October 1967 but was not approved until February 1968—and then only for 200 positions. Top level officials of the Post Office Department worked closely with the FEB, the Employment Service, and the CEP staff to assure that all details of the program would be carefully worked out. All enrollees would receive a two-week orientation course before reporting for duty. While at the Orientation Center, they would receive a medical examination and could arrange for legal aid or child care services, if needed. In addition, a follow-up coach would be assigned to each enrollee.

Hiring began in March 1968, building up to 181 in September; 96 of them male and 85 female. Of the remaining 19, 11 failed to report for duty after having been assigned through the CEP, four resigned for personal reasons, two resigned to enter military service, and two were disqualified for medical reasons.

By ethnic grouping, the total complement was:

Negro	96
Spanish surname	47
Chinese	23
Indian (American)	3
Other	12
Total	181

Because of the careful planning and preparation that went into the CEP phase of the program, the preliminary results were even more encouraging than the results of the task force phase. Of the two groups who had taken the examination by September 1968, a total of 41 of 50 in the first group, and 31 of 39 in the second group, had already passed the examination. Thus, 71 of the first 89 enrollees to take the examination had qualified for permanent positions in the postal service.

Equally encouraging was the comparative statistical analysis maintained by the Post Office between CEP enrollees and regular merit system employees. For the first 14 weeks of the program, comparative statistics reflected the following:

	Turnover Rate	Sick Leave Usage	Annual Leave Usage	Separated Employees (av. no. of weeks worked)
CEP enrollees	8.0%	1.0%	0.0%	7.0
Merit system employees	12.0	1.6	0.4	2.5

In the earlier experiment, the disadvantaged, in addition to poorer performance, had tended to make greater use of sick leave and annual leave, perhaps because they felt less secure. In the later phase, the CEP enrollees apparently performed better in each category than their merit system counterparts, perhaps because of better orientation and training of employees and supervisors. While this performance does not necessarily challenge the validity of the Civil Service testing process for such entry level jobs, it does indicate that handicaps can be overcome. It leaves little doubt that many persons not able to compete successfully on regular examinations can become satisfactory and productive civil servants.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

A commitment has been made to assist those facing handicaps in the competition for jobs to achieve a satisfactory place in the job market. In pursuit of that goal, a bewildering variety of manpower programs has been developed and tried experimentally. The Concentrated Employment Program was the 1967 model and private employer participation became the star of the 1968 season. Ghetto entrepreneurships seem destined for the starring role in 1969. The degree to which private employers will hire, train, and retain the disadvantaged and at what cost to the government still remains to be seen. However, if the federal government as the nation's largest single employer expects private employers to adapt their policies and practices to the needs of a less attractive work force, it cannot avoid a similar responsibility.

There has been no effective national program for meeting such a commitment, though there have been significant but limited *ad hoc* efforts and a willingness to centralize efforts to seek and retain the services of highly skilled college graduates (by providing adequate training opportunities, expanding salary schedules, and making fringe benefit provisions more attractive) in order to make the federal service competitive with the other institutions.

In contrast, there has been no comprehensive program within the federal personnel structure for hiring the disadvantaged. The San Francisco effort was limited to one city and primarily to one agency, and emerged only under crisis conditions, yet it demonstrated the potency of a coherent, politically supported program.

The white-collar nature of employment in the federal service has been used to defend a limited role in employing the disadvantaged. However, their future depends largely upon gaining access to this rapidly growing job area. The desire of agency officials, Congress, and the Civil Service Commission to fill jobs with the best personnel available is understandable and laudable, but no less so than the similar preferences of private employers. Employing the disadvantaged in the federal Civil Service to any meaningful extent will require alteration of some basic tenets of the merit system, but equally profound changes are being advocated for the private sector.

Fortunately, hiring the disadvantaged in the federal service will require only alteration and not abandonment of the merit system. It need not imply an inferior public service. It does require careful matching of people to jobs by redesigning the jobs and the supervision as well as by "processing" the workers.

The inverse rating method outlined in the recently announced A-level examining procedure should be a major contribution. However, it is doubtful that this technique alone can overcome the traditional biases inherent in the system. Despite the risks for the merit system, it will be necessary to create special hiring categories for the disadvantaged. These people need assistance beyond that available to the regular employee. Using the disadvantaged need not detract from the accomplishment of primary missions if supervisors are offered added rewards for using them efficiently.

A real commitment should be made and a uniform program established for bringing the disadvantaged into meaningful employment. The first step should be the establishment of a group within the Civil Service Commission with the sole assignment and authority to develop a viable program. Extensive education will be required of both agency officials and rank and file employees whose middle-class prejudices have often obstructed efforts to rehabilitate the disadvantaged.

A realistic appraisal is required to determine the contributions which the federal agencies can make. The feasibility must be assessed of providing basic education, prevocational adjustment, and skill training once the enrollees are brought into the service. The extent to which a particular agency should participate must be determined, instead of relying upon voluntary efforts. The positions for which the disadvantaged could be meaningfully trained should be identified, and goals established. A system of outreach and recruitment should be developed. Potential applicants must be sought out and given preparatory services, even before they enter into an active employment-training experience. Supervisors must be trained as well as the new recruits, and the reactions of fellow employees must be considered.

The characteristics which disqualify an individual for federal employment must be adequately defined. Procedures can then be set up to screen in clients and assess the assistance they require. Just another examination announcement will not work; what is needed is a procedure apart from the usual hiring channels.

The problems raised by personnel ceilings and budgetary limitations should be faced. It might be well to allocate funds from manpower and antipoverty budgets to provide services for employees taken into the federal service in the same manner that private employment of the disadvantaged is being subsidized in the JOBS program. Participants in such a program should not be counted against ceilings; rather, they should be allocated to the agencies according to their ability to provide the needed supervision, instruction, and work experience opportunities.

The major issue facing the Civil Service Commission is just how far it *can* go. Many within the Commission are firmly committed to expanding oppor-

tunities for the disadvantaged within the federal service. These same people contend that nearly all that *can* be done, within the legislative and statutory framework in which CSC must operate, *has* been done. The apparent solution to this dilemma is either legislative or executive modification of the merit system to permit and require a more extensive involvement of the federal agencies. Without this action, there is little likelihood of a really viable program. The advantages of such action are twofold. First, it would eliminate artificial restraints that may currently preclude active participation on the part of agencies; and second, it would emphasize the real commitment of the federal government to these purposes. Directives from CSC to the agencies are numerous enough that some worthy activities often become lost in the shuffle. A Presidential announcement, for instance, that made a specific commitment to these purposes might have a major impact.

The federal leadership in establishing social programs for the alleviation of unemployment and poverty has been commendable. The OEO community action goal of including the poor in the rectification of their own plight is desirable. The adoption of a meaningful program for hiring the disadvantaged by the nation's largest employer could serve both of these causes. It could also offer the disadvantaged a self-sufficient and meaningful role in federal programs contributing to the service of society. The federal government employs only three million people, compared to twelve million in state and local government and seventy-six million in the private sector. Yet the federal employer should be the most responsive to public policy needs, providing the pattern for the others. With the successful development of a coherent program for employing the disadvantaged, the federal government could not only set an example for private industry and state and local governments; it could also use its own experience to demonstrate how to achieve success. Its own house would be in order.

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